



## **UTAH ATTORNEY GENERAL S.E.C.U.R.E STRIKE FORCE**

### **FY 2019 ANNUAL REPORT TO THE UTAH LEGISLATURE**

In 2009, the Utah legislature tasked the Utah Attorney General to “administer and coordinate the operation of a multi-agency strike force to combat violent and other major felony crimes within this state that are associated with illegal immigration and human trafficking.” U.C.A. § 67-5-22.7. Today, a team of elite Special Agent Investigators, highly qualified prosecutors and support staff carry out this mandate in the form of the S.E.C.U.R.E (Statewide Enforcement of Crimes involving Undocumented Residents) Strike Force.

The S.E.C.U.R.E Strike Force partners with many Federal and State law enforcement agencies to ensure the directive of the legislature, including the U.S. Attorney’s Office, U.S. Immigration & Customs Enforcement (ICE/ERO), U.S. Secret Service, U.S. Postal Inspection Service, and state and local law enforcement agencies. S.E.C.U.R.E prosecutors are crossed-deputized as Special Assistant U.S. Attorneys, allowing them to prosecute in both state and federal court. Through these partnerships and its own independent investigations, the S.E.C.U.R.E Strike Force capably investigates and prosecutes hundreds of cases involving illegal immigration, human trafficking, and associated offenses each year.

The S.E.C.U.R.E Team of Investigators, Prosecutors and support staff are active participants in the Utah Trafficking in Persons Task Force (UTIP). In this role, they work with non-governmental organizations, victim service providers, educators, and other stakeholders to combat human trafficking throughout Utah. The S.E.C.U.R.E Team has become recognized experts in the human trafficking field, presenting on the topic across the state and at major national human trafficking conferences.

The S.E.C.U.R.E Strike Force also hosts and helps facilitate the Utah Identity Theft Task Force (ITTF). The I.T.T.F targets criminals who obtain and create false identification to perpetrate large-scale fraud and theft operations across the state. Crimes associated with identity fraud often cross

jurisdictional boundaries and affect hundreds of victims. The total loss amounts associated with these crimes can be astronomical. The S.E.C.U.R.E Strike Force pursues these cases statewide and federally, to ensure these offenders receive sentences appropriate to the scale of their crimes.

By nurturing and building these strong statewide partnerships, S.E.C.U.R.E continues to carry out the mandate of the legislature by targeting criminal enterprises associated with human trafficking, identity theft, fraudulent documents, illicit narcotics and firearms. The S.E.C.U.R.E Strike Force's unique ability to thoroughly investigate these large-scale crimes and follow-up with a large-scale prosecution of these offenders helps ensure the safety of Utah's communities and protect the rights of all Utahns.

S.E.C.U.R.E Strike Force Agents generated **224** investigations in FY 2019.

Approximate break down of investigations/arrests:

- 61 Arrests
- 46 Fraud/Forgery/Counterfeiting
- 23 Narcotics Distribution / Drug Crimes
- 75 Sex Offenses / Human Trafficking
- 3 Weapons
- 57 Search Warrants
- 57 Misc. Cases, Citizen Assist, Police Assist, etc.

S.E.C.U.R.E prosecutors filed **71** criminal cases in various jurisdictions through the state of Utah and U.S. Federal District Court in FY 2019.

- 70 State cases filed
- 4 Federal case filed
- 68 Arrest Warrants

Approximate Breakdown of Charges Filed:

- 125 Fraud/Forgery/Counterfeiting
- 45 Narcotics Distribution / Drug Crimes
- 12 Sex Offenses/Human Trafficking
- 5 Weapons
- 37 Misc. Other Charges (Kidnapping, Threat of Violence, Pattern of Unlawful Activity, Money Laundering, Assault, Retail Theft, etc.)

*\*It should be noted that Human Trafficking investigations do not always result in Human Trafficking related charges, for various reasons, including, but not limited to, the protection of the victim(s).*

### **Notable FY 2019 Human Trafficking Prosecutions**

- On January 4, 2018, the Utah Attorney General's Office charged Travis Gentry in the Fifth District Court, Washington County, with several felonies including Aggravated Kidnapping, Aggravated Human Trafficking, and sexual assault charges. The defendant kidnapped the victim, forced her to have sex with him, and told the woman he planned to force her to engage in commercial sex with other men in order to pay off a debt. The defendant was held to answer on all charges at a preliminary hearing on March 19, 2018. Venue was later transferred to Salt Lake County at the request of the defendant. On January 18, 2019, the defendant pleaded guilty to Human Trafficking and Attempted Aggravated Exploitation of Prostitution. He is currently serving a sentence of 1-15 years in the Utah State Prison.
- On February 12, 2018, the Utah Attorney General's Office charged Joseph Moore in the Second District Court, in Weber County, with Human Trafficking, Human Trafficking of a Child, and Aggravated Exploitation of Prostitution. The defendant Joseph Moore recruited a 16-year-old female child and his own 18-year-old daughter into a commercial sex operation that he managed and profited from. A preliminary hearing was held on June 26, 2018. The defendant was held to answer on all charges. A three-day trial was held at the end of January 2019. The child victim testified, and the jury believed her. The defendant was convicted of Human Trafficking of a Child, Aggravated Exploitation of Prostitution Involving a Child, and Exploiting Prostitution. On March 13, 2019, Moore was sentenced to 5 to Life in the Utah State Prison.
- On November 13, 2018, the Utah Attorney General's Office charged James Savage Brown in the Third District Court, Salt Lake County, with several first-degree felonies including Aggravated Human Trafficking for Forced Sexual Exploitation, Aggravated Kidnapping, Rape, Forcible Sodomy, and Aggravated Exploitation of Prostitution. The defendant trafficked two adult women for commercial sex; and kept one of the victims in a motel room for several days where he raped her multiple times, beat her, stuck her with hypodermic needles and threatened her with a knife. Brown used a pattern of violence, threats, debt bondage, and manipulation of drug addictions to coerce the women to work in his commercial sex operation. A 3-day Jury Trial was held and on August 30, 2019, the jury returned a guilty verdict on all counts. Sentencing is set for October 21, 2019, and the State intends to recommend the defendant be ordered to serve two sentences of life in prison to run consecutively; one life sentence for each victim.

### **OTHER Notable FY 2019 S.E.C.U.R.E Investigations & Prosecutions**

- On May 29, 2018, the Utah Attorney General's Office charged Andre Eugene Williams in Third District Court, Salt Lake County, with several charges related to distribution of a controlled substance and exploiting a prostitute. In this case, the defendant was offering for sale,

methamphetamine and commercial sexual exploitation. The S.E.C.U.R.E. undercover Agents made three controlled buys of methamphetamine from the defendant and had him deliver a female for the purpose of commercial sexual exploitation. In July 2018, the defendant pleaded guilty to Distribution of A Controlled Substance And Exploitation Of Prostitution and was placed on 36 months' probation. The defendant's probation was subsequently revoked due to probation violations and he is currently serving a sentence of 210 days in the County Jail.

- On December 11, 2018, the Utah Attorney General's Office charged Francisco Daniel Partida Soto in Fifth District Court, Washington County, with four counts of Forgery and one count of Producing False Identification. Soto was involved in the illegal manufacturing and distribution of fraudulent identification documents which resembled U.S. issued Society Security cards and U.S. issued permanent resident cards. A S.E.C.U.R.E. undercover Agent contacted Soto and made two controlled buys for a total of thirty-two fraudulent documents and was instructed to wire payment for the documents to an individual in Las Vegas, Nevada. Soto was subsequently arrested upon making delivery of the documents to an undercover S.E.C.U.R.E. Agent in St. George, Utah. On March 21, 2019, Soto pleaded guilty to Possession of Another's I.D. documents, a 3<sup>rd</sup> Degree Felony. He was sentenced to 0-5 years in the Utah State Prison, 36 months' probation and he was ordered to be immediately deported from the United States.
- On November 9, 2018, the Utah Attorney General's Office charged Roberto Carlos Aguilar-Flores in 3<sup>rd</sup> District Court, Salt Lake County, with Possession of a Dangerous Weapon by a Restricted Person, a Second-Degree Felony, along with multiple counts of Possession of a Controlled Substance. The S.E.C.U.R.E. Prosecutors who are also cross-deputized Special Assistant U.S. Attorneys filed federal charges against Aguilar-Flores and he was subsequently indicted in U.S. Federal District Court on charges of Illegal Alien in Possession of a Firearm, Possession of Cocaine with Intent to Distribute, and Possession of Marijuana with Intent to Distribute. On April 29, 2019, Aguilar-Flores pleaded guilty in Federal Court to Count 1 Illegal Alien in Possession of a Firearm and on July 15, 2019, he was sentenced to twelve months and one day in Federal Prison and ordered deported from the United States.
- On April 11, 2018, the Utah Attorney General's Office charged Luis Miguel Valdes-Rodriguez in Third District Court, Salt Lake County, with 7 counts Possession of Controlled Substance with Intent to Distribute, s and 1 count Possession of a Firearm by a Restricted Person, all Second-Degree Felonies. In this case, S.E.C.U.R.E. Agents learned that Valdes-Rodriguez was selling weapons and drugs from his auto shop located in Salt Lake City. An undercover officer made two undercover buys from Valdes-Rodriguez in which he purchased a Springfield XD 9mm pistol, cocaine and methamphetamine from the defendant. On November 13, 2018, the Defendant pleaded guilty to Possession with Intent to Distribute, a Second- Degree Felony and was sentenced to 1-15 years in the Utah State Prison (suspended), 270 days in Jail, 60 months' probation and he was released to I.C.E. for immediate deportation.
- On April 15, 2019, the Utah Attorney General's Office charged Gustavo A Nava Marmol in the Fourth District Court in Utah County with Identity Fraud, a Second-Degree Felony, and two counts Possession of a Forged Writing. The Utah Department of Workforce Services notified the

Utah Attorney General's Office that that Marmol had been using the Social Security Number of a 7-year-old child who is a United States citizen, as well as the permanent resident number that did not belong to him, but to another permanent resident of the United States. Marmol, who had been using the numbers illegally to work within the United States, was given the opportunity to meet with an immigration attorney to apply to legally remain in the United States. On July 18, 2019, Marmol pleaded guilty to Identity Fraud, a class A Misdemeanor and placed on probation for 360 days and ordered to pay a fine of \$250.